

Chapter 4

OPERATIONS IN AN NBC ENVIRONMENT

“Whether or not gas will be employed in future wars is a matter of conjecture, but the effect is so deadly to the unprepared that we can never afford to neglect the question.”

General of the Armies John J. Pershing, 1919

CONCEPT

After your unit has survived an NBC attack, it may have to operate under NBC conditions for an extended period. Your goal should be to perform your combat tasks with minimum degradation and suffer few or no NBC casualties. A well-trained unit can attain this goal. Well-trained troops can perform most collective tasks in MOPP4 with minimum reduction in combat effectiveness. Try to avoid changing normal procedures, because most routine tasks can be performed in MOPP4. Non-routine or cognitive tasks cannot be performed as readily, and some degradation will occur. As much as possible, keep operations simple and routine, and develop work-arounds where problems exist.

Although you can perform most mission tasks with minimum reduction in effectiveness, the longer your troops are in MOPP4, the more degradation will occur. Therefore, your priority should be to avoid contamination to fight clean or, if that is not possible, find ways to reduce the MOPP level as quickly as possible. This may

TC 3-10

require you to move from contaminated areas to clean areas or find ways to periodically reduce to MOPP1/2. Avoid operating in contaminated areas for long periods.

Complete decontamination of vehicles and terrain is difficult, time consuming, and a logistical burden. This should have a low priority. However, decontamination of personnel and personal equipment should have top priority and be performed immediately. Operational decontamination of crew-served weapons and vehicles should be accomplished when the situation permits.

Continue your mission because you can operate effectively in an NBC environment. Your unit is NBC ready when it can accomplish its battle tasks in MOPP4.

NOTES:

What Are Your Major Operational Concerns?

How Do You Address These Concerns ?

Fear

You must instill confidence in soldiers through realistic training and information briefings.

Address fear or psychological factors by establishing confidence in equipment, discussing what to expect during sustained operations in an NBC environment, and by the unit being NBC ready. Ensure NBC equipment is available, properly fitted and maintained, and in correct quantities. You must instill confidence in soldiers through realistic training. Use your chemical battle staff.

Effectiveness

You should be able to perform your primary mission with minimum degradation in an NBC environment.

Train your unit to operate in an NBC environment. Three things to emphasize are doing primary tasks in MOPP4, care and fit of the protective masks, and physical fitness. The Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) and other CTCs are excellent vehicles to train collective tasks under NBC conditions.

Sustainment

Sustainment is more difficult under NBC conditions because CSS tasks are adversely affected due to troops wearing individual protective equipment. There will also be a greater demand for water, fuel, NBC equipment, and medical services.

Unique NBC requirements must be emphasized and addressed for all phases of your operations. Use chemical battle staff – for details see Chapter 5.

Fatigue

MOPP level should be lowered when possible to improve unit effectiveness and reduce psychological impact. It is more difficult to decide when and to what level to reduce, than to increase MOPP level.

As discussed in the survival chapter, there are specific guidelines on when to go into MOPP4. The more difficult decision is when to reduce. If the attack is not directly on your unit, you can probably reduce to MOPP3 (check with detector paper or downwind hazard predictions.) Have chemical battle staff provide recommendations; your goal is to reduce from MOPP4 as soon as possible.

Leaders

Leaders are usually the most adversely affected individuals on the battlefield. Recent tests have shown they tend to delegate less, get less sleep, and "burn out" faster in an NBC environment.

They should be monitored to ensure they are properly pacing themselves, getting rest, drinking water, and delegating tasks (this includes you!). Make sure your subordinate leaders are aware of this problem.

Contamination Avoidance

By avoiding contamination, you eliminate or reduce the need for NBC protection and decontamination.

Actions include conducting vulnerability analysis, locating and identifying NBC hazards, using cover and concealment, preventing the spread of contamination, moving from contaminated areas, and not moving through or into contaminated areas. Use the chemical battle staff for recommendations.

What Are Your Required Actions?

- **Make MOPP decisions**
- **Make avoidance decisions**
- **Use chemical battle staff**

Make MOPP Decisions

Your goal is to reduce protection to MOPP1/2 as soon as possible. Use chemical battle staff for recommendations.

Make Avoidance Decisions

If you have a choice, do not move through a contaminated area. However, if you must, raise your NBC protection level and do not stop -- you will probably receive very little contamination. Move out of contaminated areas as soon as possible; over 40% of gas casualties in WWI were from units staying unnecessarily in contaminated areas.

TC 3-10

Use Chemical Battle Staff

Use chemical battle staff for recommendation on MOPP levels, the NBC threat, NBCWRS, movement through or out of contaminated areas, and decontamination. Ensure they are integrated into all facets of staff operations.

What Actions Are Required From Your Unit?

- **Continue the mission**
- **Perform individual NBC tasks (all ranks)**
- **Perform unit NBC tasks**
- **Avoid contamination**
- **Make MOPP decisions**
- **Perform selective decontamination**

Continue the Mission

Continuing the mission must have top priority. NBC considerations must not become a dominant factor in determining mission decisions. An NBC-ready unit can operate effectively in this environment. Keep operations simple.

Perform Individual NBC Tasks (All Ranks)

Conduct these tasks as required by the situation. Tasks include donning masks, performing first aid, and conducting personal wipe down.

Perform Unit NBC Tasks

Report status of casualties and contamination. Mark contaminated areas. Perform surveys as time and resources permit.

Avoid Contamination

Monitor with RADIAC instruments, chemical detectors and alarms, and chemical detector paper, as appropriate, when not moving. Avoid or limit contamination by moving to clean areas as soon as possible. To locate clean areas, use organic and available chemical units to perform NBC reconnaissance.

Make MOPP Decisions

Use MOPP analysis to determine the applicable MOPP level. Operate with minimum amount of NBC protection by reducing MOPP as quickly as possible. Seek recommendations from the chemical battle staff.

Perform Selective Decontamination

Individual decontamination is usually done after a direct attack to allow soldiers to survive and continue the mission. Contaminated equipment is decontaminated to allow the mission to continue. Decontamination reduces the time your unit stays in MOPP4 and limits the spread of contamination. Both operational and thorough decontamination are resource intensive operations. Weathering can enhance decontamination and may under certain situations eliminate the need for thorough decontamination.

What Actions Are Required From Chemical Battle Staff?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep commander informed• Perform MOPP analysis• Request decontamination, reconnaissance, and smoke support• Perform vulnerability analysis

Keep Commander Informed

This includes all aspects of the NBC situation; recommendations on MOPP levels, decontamination, reconnaissance, smoke; and vulnerability/threat for future operations.

Perform MOPP Analysis

This is a continuous process and is based on METT-T. Provide recommendations to the commander on MOPP levels.

Request Decontamination, Reconnaissance, and Smoke Support

Develop and recommend decontamination, reconnaissance, or smoke support based on METT-T. Coordinate actions with both the unit providing the support and the unit receiving support.

Perform Vulnerability Analysis

Conduct a vulnerability analysis and recommend if unit should move from contaminated area based on METT-T.